



**Center for Strategic & International Studies  
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**“Ukraine and the World”  
Speech by Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski  
At the National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy  
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**DR. BRIUKHOVETSKY, PRESIDENT OF KYIV MOHYLA ACADEMY:**

Ukraine is a very important part of Europe and it depends to a great extent on us, but not on Professor Brzezinski. Now I would like before I invite Mr. Brzezinski to make his speech...I would like to give him a diploma and give him the title of honorary professor at our university since the year 2000. (Long Pause) Diploma number 212, of the National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy dated June 28, 2000, the title of honorary professor of this university was given to Professor Brzezinski in recognition of his outstanding achievements.

Now I would like to give the floor to Professor Brzezinski and I would like to say that we propose the following procedure for this event. Professor Brzezinski will speak for about 25 minutes then we'll have a Q and A session. Our students will ask their questions first and then we will allocate 10 minutes, beginning at 6:20 or 6:30, to ask questions by members of the press and by the guests. We'll try to stick to this procedure. Dr. Brzezinski—the floor is yours.

**DR. BRZEZINSKI:**

Distinguished rector, members of the faculty, ladies and gentlemen and also some personal friends whom I recognize in the audience and who I'm delighted to see again. First of all let me say how very honored I am to receive today a doctorate of this renowned, internationally recognized, and important institution. I am familiar with its history and the role it has played in the intellectual life and in the national consciousness of the Ukrainian people. Founded many centuries ago, much earlier than most institutions in America. Suppressed 202 years later and then reborn some 175 years later. This institution is also a testimonial, a testimonial to the desire of the Ukrainian people to shape their own destiny, to define their identity, and to contribute to the common European heritage of which Ukraine is so very much an integral part. Anyone even remotely familiar with the history of Europe knows that this city here, a thousand years ago, was already then a center of European culture, a center of learning, of thought, and also of searching for something beyond human existence, of searching for some definition of the meaning of life. So you are a part of an important tradition and your renewal and vitality is a triumph of the spirit as well as a source of satisfaction to your friends. I consider myself one of your friends.

Today I plan to speak to you about a very big subject, Ukraine and the world. And of course all of you here know much more about that subject than I do, since the first word in the subject is Ukraine. So I want to add a qualification, namely that I will speak of Ukraine and the world as seen from the outside, as seen from far away, by someone who is interested in the condition of the world and who is interested in the place of Ukraine in that world. I consider Ukraine's

independence to be truly a major historical event of great international significance. This was not appreciated at first, particularly in the West and specifically in the United States. Even now, in my view, there is not sufficient international appreciation of the international significance of Ukraine. It has to be emphasized over and over again that an independent Ukraine has redefined the frontiers of Europe and an independent Ukraine is transforming Russia into a national state. These are extraordinarily important developments. It is now a decade and a half since the turbulent days of the rebirth of your national independence. It is appropriate therefore to ask what has been accomplished in those 15 years, and a great deal has been accomplished. First of all, Ukrainian independence has been consolidated internationally. Secondly, its territorial integrity has been preserved; I need only mention Crimea or Tuzla. Thirdly, Ukraine has carried out very effective and internationally positive nuclear disarmament. Fourthly, Ukraine has had a remarkably impressive presidential transition, and I speak particularly of the elections which led from president Kravchuk to President Kuchma. Next, Ukraine's economic growth today, after some years, is now most impressive; indeed, it is among the highest in Europe. And Ukraine, last but not least, is participating in peacekeeping in the Balkans and now in Iraq and these are important contributions and thus this is an impressive record.

But we have to recognize that global conditions, as well as Ukraine's own internal affairs, are still quite fluid, and let us take therefore a closer look at both global affairs and internal Ukrainian issues and consider their possible implications. If basic currently ongoing political economic and military trends continue for another 25 or 30, years we are likely to see a world in which the global hierarchy of power, the global hierarchy of influential states, is likely to be as follows. At the top there will still be the United States. Secondly, probably the most influential power would be the European Union, by then including both Turkey and Ukraine. Thirdly it will be China. Fourth it will be Japan and fifth it will be India. Notice the significant shift of global gravity, of the center of global gravity to Asia. In that setting the democratic core of the world, the Atlantic community, will still be the principal impulse for innovation, the critical source of stability, and the point of origin of the radiating appeal of democracy. However only, only, if present trends continue, and they could be reversed or even derailed and there are already some symptoms of mounting global disorder and some signs of basic misjudgments that give cause for prudent, cautious concern. Let me note first of all, and it is not a criticism but a statement of fact, that today America is more isolated, more mistrusted, and in some places even more hated than ever before. America could even become bogged down in a huge portion of Eurasia, in an area from Suez to Xinjiang, from southern Russia to the Arabian Sea, an area that I call the global Balkans, especially if its engagement in that part of the world remains largely solitary. It is also not a prediction but a real possibility that Europe's unification will continue to be largely socioeconomic with Europe remaining politically diffused and inward oriented without a defined strategic vision of the larger world and without the political will and the military means to genuinely influence the developments in the world and without defining jointly with the U.S. common strategic goals. In that context the engagement of Russia in a closer association with Europe might be diverted towards traditions of imperial goals to the detriment of both democracy in Russia and national independence of Russia's recently emancipated but still vulnerable neighbors. One has to note also that it is far from certain that the wide gap between the trajectories of China's socioeconomic transformation, which do produce more pluralism, and of its much slower political transformation, may not cause major political upheavals, which will be detrimental to the stability of the Far East. And last but not least, the growing access not only by

states but by terrorist or criminal organizations to weapons of mass destruction in the setting of percolating global turmoil and intense political resentments that cannot be understood merely by the repetitive invocation of the word “terrorism” host the risk of the progressive degradation of global order, as well as the growing vulnerability of democratic societies. The cumulative effect of these negative tendencies could be escalating global chaos detrimental particularly to weaker states.

In that context a closer connection between America and an expanding Europe is clearly needed. In essence, we need to promote the further expansion both of the European Union and of NATO. Neither political geography nor geostrategy is a static concept. They evolve and the recent expansions of both organizations place now on the agenda the future status of Ukraine, of Turkey, and of the newly independent states of the Caucasus. Their eventual association will then facilitate the constructive engagement of Russia with its imperial option altogether than foreclosed.

However, such a large Atlantic community that includes Ukraine is not possible without Ukrainian efforts. Ukrainians themselves must overcome, and they must overcome themselves, the twin burdens inflicted upon them by the negative historical legacies of prolonged foreign domination and of destructive communism. Both have hindered the emergence of a pervasive Ukrainian patriotic civic consciousness, which is essential to democracy and independence. Both, I mean foreign domination and communism, have created the tradition of state control over national resources, which in the new conditions of market economy have generated enormous opportunities for avarice by only a few self enriching people. Both precluded and established supremacy of law over politics as well as over the disposition of national resources thereby facilitating corruption. Last but not least, both have favored the habitual tendencies of bureaucrats and those in power to control freedom of information, to stifle criticism, and to manipulate elections. The persistence of these negative tendencies is damaging Ukraine’s good name in the world and they are being exploited by outsiders to penetrate, manipulate, and weaken Ukraine’s independence.

When Ukrainians make a judgment about these domestic developments, they should not measure themselves by what has been happening in Russia and they should not take refuge that conditions in Russia in some respects are worse. They should measure themselves by what has been happening in the Baltic republics or in Poland. If these negative trends within Ukraine were to intersect with some negative global trends that I have mentioned, Ukraine could become very similar to the Poland of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. That is to say, like the Polish magnates, some sectors of the newly powerful and the newly rich could become seduced by Ukraine’s more powerful neighbor which could then exploit international instability, including the failure of America and Europe to work together, and exploit Ukraine’s relatively still weak national consciousness to turn Ukraine into its satellite even if not again into just its province. It follows, therefore, that we in the West must strive for a vital European-American partnership and build deliberately an Atlantic community that redefines the geography of Europe. And let us not forget that the Central Europe of today was the Eastern Europe of just yesterday. We must build an Atlantic community open to the new Eastern Europe, and not an Atlantic community that is closed and self-centered.

The time is now right for the Atlantic community to focus with a sense of strategic purpose on the third phase of the Atlantic community's enlargement. The first phase, which we might call the Warsaw round, enlarged NATO to parts of Central Europe including Ukraine's immediate neighbor, Poland. The second phase, which we might call the Vilnius round, resulted in the rest of Central Europe being included in both NATO and the EU. The next phase, which I'd like to call the Kiev round, should look further east. June will provide such opportunities, especially the Istanbul-NATO summit. And one desirable outcome in the not too distant future, if not in June, should be a Membership Action Plan for Ukraine. In doing so, we in the West must recognize and respect Ukraine's accomplishments but also be alert to its shortcomings. To make that possible, the Ukrainians must also on their own vigilantly consolidate a genuinely constitutional state in which there is no room for politically expedient constitutional manipulation. They must hold genuinely free presidential elections, thereby setting a contrasting example with recent experiences in Russia. That these elections be free, that they be absolutely legitimate, is more important than who wins them. That the elections be free is more important than who wins them. And the world will watch closely and will draw its own conclusions. Ukrainians must also foster a civic society based on a deep social awareness of ancient Ukrainian traditions, which as I said earlier, made Kiev at one point one of Europe's cultural and religious centers. Historically rooted patriotic pride can reinforce a self-confident civic society. Ukrainians in that context should increasingly see themselves as Central Europeans and as part of a Central Europe with which Ukrainians have much culturally in common, and with Russia—now the Eastern Europe of Europe. Ukrainians, last but not least, must protect freedom of the press and subordinate political life to the rule of law, both of which are essential components of democratic society, and in so doing strive to meet the objective criteria for membership in the European Union and NATO. All of that requires time and deliberate effort. I hope you'll not be offended by my speaking so frankly, but I feel I have the right to do so because I have been a friend of your country for years and I have been dedicated to your independence. I believe that your success will not only redefine Ukraine as one of Europe's leading nations, it will also set an important example for Russia, facilitating Russia's own road to Europe, and thus further redefining both Europe as well as Russia, and that in turn will further enhance the prospects for a genuinely better world. What you do in the near future and how you do it is therefore important to all of us who wish you well. Thank you.

#### Question and Answer Session

##### QUESTION:

High officials of the European Union have announced that they do not see Ukraine as the European Union's member even in 20 years. Do you think this can change the strategy of Ukraine's foreign policy focus on integration, influencing our vision of Ukraine as part of Europe? What do you think about what high officials of Europe have said—is it true?

##### DR. BRZEZINSKI:

They have said exactly what you cite them as saying. Ten years ago they were saying that the Baltic republics will never be part of NATO or the European Union. Fifteen years ago they were saying that Poland will never be part of NATO and of the European Union. Bureaucrats are not known for political imagination. Before you clap too much, let me remind you of something else. They did not change their minds about Poland or the Baltic republics because all of the

sudden lightning hit their heads and they acquired political imagination. Why did they change their minds? Because the Poles and the Balts, the citizens of the Baltic republics, created objective conditions to which there had to be a response, facts had to be realized. Don't wait for invitations from Europe or from NATO because you will not get them. These are not clubs which go around inviting people to join. They are communities which accept countries when it is in the interest of the community to have those countries inside. And you have to create conditions that convince NATO, convince the European Union, that it is in their interests to have you. I think it is, and I think we should be receptive, but it is really up to you and therefore how you handle your political life, how you handle your economic life, will determine who you will be and where you will be. Maybe not even in 20 years, conceivably even in 10 years.

**QUESTION:**

What changes in U.S.-Ukrainian relations may take place after the loss by Bush of the election campaign?

**DR. BRZEZINSKI:**

I don't think there will be that much change, in part for reasons that I have already explained. The relationship between Ukraine and America is at least as much a function of what Ukraine does as it is of what America does. America in general is interested in a larger Europe, and America is interested in a partnership with Europe. America also doesn't want to see a zone of instability around Europe, and America welcomes additions to Europe that consolidate a larger zone of peace and progress but also increase the probability of a partnership between Europeans and Americans. So I think that the policy itself will not change much. I think in our relationship there is a lot of opportunity for expansion of specific relations. If I were in America, I would be more directly critical of some specific aspects of American policy towards Ukraine, but in general I think that on both sides there has to be a recognition of mutual interests in the expansion of a more constructive partnership.

**QUESTION:**

If Europe loses Ukraine now, what will it lose in the future?

**DR. BRZEZINSKI:**

Well, it will lose two things. If Europe loses Ukraine it will also lose Russia, and by losing both Ukraine and Russia, it will be less secure. So there is a European stake in a close relationship with Ukraine. But Ukraine and Russia are not going to enter Europe at the same time. The differences between the two countries are significant, not only geographically, and there has to be a sequential process. Ukraine's entrance into Europe will accelerate also in the longer run a more comprehensive and more satisfactory relationship between Europe and Russia.

**QUESTION:**

Dr. Brzezinski, you said in Ukraine it is more important not who wins the election, but how the election will go. If we don't have democratic elections here in Ukraine, if they elections don't meet European or American standards, what will the reaction of the West be because regarding, for example, countries like Pakistan, which had some political upheavals, America changed its position towards the leaders of those countries who came to power in a non-democratic manner. If we don't have democratic elections in Ukraine, is there a chance that America will change its

attitude to the Ukrainian leaders? What will the reaction of the West be if we do not have Western-style elections in this country?

DR. BRZEZINSKI:

Well, first of all, I don't think you should compare yourself even indirectly with Pakistan. The situation there is so different. I think you should ask yourself what would have been the reaction of the United States if, for example, in the elections in Slovakia a certain politician had won. I think the relationship would have been much cooler, much more distant. I think that, however, even more important than that is the character of the elections, because if the elections are free and fair and legitimate, then no matter who wins them it has a cumulative effect on the evolution of a democratic society. Ukraine is an important country with which it is in the interest of Europe and of America to have a positive relationship, so we don't take a position on who wins your elections because we are confident that if the elections are free and legitimate, that in itself will help to define the character of the regime that emerges from the elections, no matter who has won them.

QUESTION:

I am student from the Department of Environmental Specialists, so I will ask an environmental question. I see that America consumes too much and it is going the wrong way. As far as I can see, in Ukraine we are making Ukrainian development, because we are the future of Ukraine and we see another way of development. What do you think about how America can change its way of development, if it wants to?

DR. BRZEZINSKI:

Well, first of all, it doesn't want to.

COMMENT:

Yes, I see. Well, it needs to. As far as we can see.

DR. BRZEZINSKI:

You may be right. I think in an abstract philosophical way, you may be right, but facts are facts—the vast majority of Americans like their life style, they value their high consumption, and they are not particularly interested in fundamentally changing the way they live. Over time I think there is developing an increasing consciousness about the environment, about consumption, and gradually I think there is going to be change. But it's not going to be dramatic and it's only going to be decided by the American people themselves because we are a democracy and we have certain traditions that we value.

[Comments from audience—in audible]

QUESTION:

How would you comment on the recent elections in Mukachevo?

DR. BRZEZINSKI:

Thank you very much. The question ends by saying thank you very much, and I am inclined to say thank you very much for the question. Well, clearly there's a problem. I don't know how it

will be resolved, but there's no doubt that there is a problem and even if one doesn't agree about this or that specific, and even if one doesn't know, at least I don't know, how to determine responsibility for what happened, there is still a problem and I think it is therefore important to face that problem, because in the eyes of many this could be viewed as a symptom of a potentially larger problem. And it is obviously in the interests of Ukraine or Mukachevo not to become the symptom of a larger problem. So I think it is in the interests of everybody who accepts the idea that it is in the interests of Ukraine to have free and legitimate elections, to address this problem in a manner that restores confidence and that is reassuring regarding the future prospects of the electoral process in Ukraine.

**QUESTION:**

Sir, I would like to ask you if there is going to be another country after Afghanistan and Iraq, and what's in Ukraine for it? What I meant to say is that Ukraine has decided to dispatch its troops to Iraq and I understand it was a smart move.

**DR. BRZEZINSKI:**

Well, whether dispatching your troops to Iraq was a smart move is your decision not my decision. I am more responsible for what happens insofar as American actions are concerned. I personally, and I now speak as a private citizen, make a distinction between Afghanistan and Iraq.

**DR. BRZEZINSKI:**

[Inaudible, in response to inaudible question] I also think that Russia will be more successful for its own people as a nation state. I happen to remember a speech delivered in the center of Kyiv in 1990 or 1991, I think by Boris Yeltsin, who told the Ukrainian people, but also indirectly told the Russian people, that nothing good has come for the Russian people from being the center of an empire. That being an empire causes costs and precipitates hatred and that Russia has a better prospect for development for normal life, for modernity, as a nation state. And I certainly think that Ukrainians will do better on their own. But I'm not in the position to urge you to be nationally independent if you don't want to be nationally independent. I don't know the person who sent this note, but if he or she wants to join Russia, you can either urge your fellow Ukrainians to join Russia or you can simply pack your suitcase and move to Russia. As far as America is concerned, I don't think we are becoming the evil empire or the world gendarme. I happen to be critical of our policy in Iraq, but it is quite different from our policy in Afghanistan. And I still notice that people want to come to America. We don't have an emigration problem, we have an immigration problem. That tells you something. Who are these people who want to come to America all the time? Why do they want to go to this evil empire, if it is so evil? I wouldn't be surprised if the person who wrote me this note had some relatives in America. Did they go to an evil country because they are evil? I think America is a very interesting country, a very open country. It is not an infallible country, and we don't claim that we are infallible, that we are always right, that we are riding the wave of history, that the future is inevitably ours, but we have been very successful in building a very modern, a very dynamic country, to which more people want to go than to any other country in the world. By the time Russia, or I hope earlier, Ukraine becomes equally attractive, the person who wrote me this note will be in a better position to say what was said about America, but at this stage it's a little premature.

QUESTION:

What is the image of Ukraine among the geopolitical leaders of the U.S. and what is the image of Ukraine among the political establishment of the United States?

DR. BRZEZINSKI:

Well, to some extent I tried to answer that question at the beginning of my speech when I spoke about the importance of Ukraine in terms of global geopolitics, but if you are specifically asking about the image of Ukraine currently, then I have to say it has somewhat deteriorated over the years. At first there was a great deal of ignorance in America or in the West about Ukraine. In fact, 25 years ago most people in the West thought that the Soviet Union was Russia and that Russia was the Soviet Union. There was very little understanding that the non-Russian nations amounted to about half of the population of the Soviet Union. Then there was a period of what we might call high expectations about Ukraine's transformation—some hope that it still be as extensive and as rapid as that, for example, of Poland. And then more lately there has been a tendency to emphasize more the shortcomings and the difficulties of Ukraine. There's not enough awareness right now, for example, that your economic growth is very impressive. There is some skepticism about the extent and durability of democratic institutions in Ukraine and this is why the presidential elections are so important. They can affect your image. But if your presidential elections are really fair and legitimate, then that plus the effects of good economic growth, I think within a year or so will begin to transform in a very positive way Ukraine's image.

QUESTION:

Audience member: Ok, I'll speak Ukrainian because it's my mother tongue. Dr. Brzezinski, do you think that some of the recent statements made by several European politicians that Ukraine has no prospects, are they not remindful of the U.S. isolationism earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that actually then led to world wars that split Europe in effect?

DR. BRZEZINSKI:

I already mentioned earlier that I thought these views showed lack of political imagination, that they are the inevitable consequence of preoccupation with immediate problems. And I think that will change if Ukraine is successful politically and economically. However, I would not compare the consequences of such negative views to perhaps the connection between American isolationism and World War II. I do not see a cataclysm developing on that scale, but certainly if the changes in Ukraine are not sufficiently attractive and impressive to prompt the European Union and NATO to welcome Ukraine, then the consequences in this part of the world will be negative. They will be negative for Ukraine. I happen to think they will also be negative for Russia because they will perpetuate then the new but existing border between the European Union and everything east of the European Union, and what would be east of the European Union would probably be less stable, less modern, less democratic.



QUESTION:

I've got a question, a speculation of a kind if I may. Recently on the Internet they posted an article that reflected the CIA analysis of Russia's future developments. Well, it boiled down to the prediction that Russia may split into eight or nine smaller states further down the road. Do you think this article had some rational, what do you think?

DR. BRZEZINSKI:

Basically, no. I don't think Russia is going to split into eight parts or five parts or whatever. I do think, however, that after the present leadership in Russia has been changed and people with more experience in the West, more Western education, more awareness of the necessity of Russia becoming closer to the Atlantic community, the effect will be some significant decentralization of Russia. I do think that a highly centralized system of government makes Moscow essentially a somewhat parasitic center of power that drains too much of foreign investment to Moscow itself to the detriment of Russia's provinces. Life elsewhere outside of Moscow, outside of Saint Petersburg is not changing as much as it should and largely because the system prevents regional initiatives from taking advantage of regional opportunities whether in the Primorsky Krai in the far East vis-à-vis Korea, Japan, China, or whether in St. Petersburg vis-à-vis Scandinavia and the Baltic republics, etc. I think a centralized system stifles initiative. America wouldn't be today what it is if everything was decided in Washington.

COMMENT:

There is no rational behind the statement that it can split.

DR. BRZEZINSKI:

Well, I don't think it's going to split, but I think decentralization will be a necessity and democratization of Russia's leadership will make those people in the political leadership in Moscow less fearful and more tolerant of decentralization. There is no national ethnic basis for a split into eight parts, but I think there is a great deal of socioeconomic need for decentralization.

QUESTION:

Dr. Brzezinski, who in your view of Ukrainian politicians should the European future of Ukraine be associated with?

DR. BRZEZINSKI:

Well, I know a great many Ukraine political leaders and the one that I strongly favor in the future is the one that in free elections gets the most votes.

DR. BRIUKHOVETSKY:

Thank you students, now we have time for 2 questions from the press.

QUESTION:

Thank you very much, now you give me the chance to ask a question, thank you very much. Mr. Brzezinski, I am happy to welcome you here as the most influential and the most ardent advocate of independent Ukraine in the United States and even here in this country. I completely share your view that America is an interesting, open, and let's say almost infallible country. I have never been in America...I have never been on alumnus exchange programs in America, but I

have worked for several years as an ITAR correspondent in Washington D.C. and your presence here reminds me of our meeting over there. I'd like to hand over to you my latest item, a politician who changed the world. I explain to your students, to Ukrainians and your students, including your students, that Mr. Brzezinski belongs to those politicians who really change the contemporary world.

DR. BRZEZINSKI:

Thank you very much for your kind comments about me and my importance and I am particularly pleased that my wife is here so she can hear that.

DR. BRIUKHOVETSKY:

We have time for one more question.

QUESTION:

I would like to say that next week it seems to me George Bush will come to Kyiv, I mean the older one, ex-president. Is there any question you would like to ask him being a journalist, and if there is such a question so what is it?

DR. BRZEZINSKI:

I have no question to ask George Bush Sr., but I think that the fact that he is coming here and he will speak here is symbolically important because he has spoken here before.

DR. BRIUKHOVETSKY:

I would like to thank Professor Brzezinski and thank all of you for being here and for listening to such an interesting speech and answers to the questions. Please don't rush to the stage because Mr. Brzezinski has got to write some words in the book of our honorary guests and we hope that the forecasts of Dr. Brzezinski will come true and we would like to wish all the best to Mr. Brzezinski and we hope one day people will have a chance to read.... (inaudible)